

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

### **Fiscal Year 2012**

This year the Information Technology (IT) Department again made measurable progress in the area of technology consolidation and standardization. The increasing demand for more technology and automation throughout the organization did not show any sign of slowing, especially wireless, mobile, and self-service technologies. The result was another increase in Department service levels, and additional devices and software systems needing to connect and communicate over the Town's technology infrastructure. The IT Department has identified consolidation and standardization as a critical element in ensuring that Department responsibilities can continue to increase at a slower rate than annual operating expenses and staffing levels.

This fiscal year the IT Department again completed well over 3,000 work orders. Work orders in the IT Department are a measurement for how busy we have been, and this year the IT Department completed a significantly larger number of work orders than in previous years. As more systems and devices require interconnectivity to the Town's technology infrastructure, more assistance will be needed from the IT Department in selecting, implementing, supporting and maintaining such systems.

The IT Department continued to make significant progress on our Public GIS Viewer which is one of the most advanced and sophisticated interactive web-based government GIS Viewers in Massachusetts. More connections were made to pertinent Amherst property data and refinements were made to users interactions with the viewers. This year reports run on the website indicated our public GIS Viewers are now the second most requested service on [amherstma.gov](http://amherstma.gov). This year the IT Department rebranded the Public GIS Viewer and named it Amherst Maps. The IT Department is excited about the Amherst Maps goals set for next year which will include support for every browser on every device including tablets and smartphones.

New website functionality was added to the Anytime Self Service system allowing users view and pay bills online in a single system was implemented in 2012. This year over 30,000 transactions were performed on the Town's website, translating to 30,000 times a person didn't have to come to a Town office to conduct business. The Town of Amherst was the first and only community to integrate with UniBank for online bill payments. Additionally, functionality has been built-in to the new system which will allow residents to opt-in for paperless billing which will significantly reduce costs and contribute to green operations.

Going paperless with automation, forms and workflow is a simple way to contribute to green efforts while creating efficiencies. This year the IT Department implanted paperless workflow between departments for purchasing. Requests are now made in Munis and the purchasing approval process is automated through intradepartmental workflow. In coming years more and more internal processes will go paperless utilizing this successful example.

In 2007 the Town's IT Department implemented a completely IP phone system. Every phone in Town buildings and the libraries including fax machines lines were transition to an IP based

system. In addition to massive cost avoidance of the many disparate individualized phone systems in the various buildings, this centralized single network phone system offered greater reliability and much needed Town-wide functionality. The system was paid for using only the savings from the old traditional phone lines to the centralized phone system. This year was the last year of the lease payment using those savings so beginning in FY 13 the Town will realize a \$40,000 per year savings in its operating budget.

The Town of Amherst website has become an incredible tool and resource for employees, residents and businesses operating in Amherst. This year the number of daily active users of the Town's website grew by an average of 25% from FY 11. This is a huge number and one that staff across all departments as well as board and committee members should be proud of. We will continue to focus heavily on developing more features, and functionality on the Town's website while keeping the site simple and fast for users.

In addition to the many projects completed this year, the IT Department worked diligently behind the scenes, maintaining, repairing, and updating the vast amount of current systems. With the ever-increasing amount of spam e-mail and the constant threat of viruses and hackers, software upgrades to computers, servers other technology systems become a daily necessity. The IT Department maintains several layers and types of specialized security hardware and software, lowering the risk of unauthorized network intrusion and viruses. The Department also maintains a variety of backup systems; both onsite and offsite, ensuring that in a disaster the Town's information and systems is safe.

The citizen expectation of a more open and digitally accessible government continues to increase. In the coming year, the IT Department will continue to maintain software and infrastructure standards, extend more information and tools to the Amherst community via the Town's websites, provide departments, boards and committees with the necessary technologies to perform primary functions even more efficiently, and leverage new technologies in ways which will serve Amherst for years to come.

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